

**Opening Statement
By Chairman Chris Smith
House Subcommittee on Africa,
Global Human Rights and International Operations
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Over the past several weeks, it seems that every magazine has featured a cover story on China – the world’s fastest growing world economy. For example, *Newsweek* called the 21st century “China’s Century.” The Chinese economy, we are told, has grown about nine percent a year for more than 25 years – the fastest growth rate for a major economy in recorded history.

This Asian giant has become the world’s largest producer of coal, steel and cement, and is now the second largest consumer of energy and the third largest importer of oil, which is helping gasoline prices to skyrocket this summer. Starbucks CEO Howard Shultz told *CNBC* in a May interview that in three years, there would be more of his company’s coffee shops in China than in the United States.

But amidst all the hoopla over China’s rapidly growing economy, there is a dark side to this country’s economic expansion that is being largely ignored. China is playing an increasingly influential role on the continent of Africa, and there is concern that the Chinese intend to aid and abet African dictators, gain a stranglehold on precious African natural resources and undo much of the progress that has been made on democracy and governance in the last 15 years in African nations.

We hear much about the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union shaping American policy toward Africa since the beginning of the African independence struggles in the 1950s. However, China’s initial relations with Africa also were shaped by its relationship with the Soviet Union. China was determined to outspend the Soviet Union and the rest of the international community in Africa to raise its stature on the world stage. The Tan-Zam Railway, completed in 1975, between Tanzania and Zambia is but one of the visible reminders of this effort.

China also supported African liberation movements in contravention of Western policies and in competition with the Soviets. China supported liberation movements across Africa, but most specifically in Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. In the Zimbabwe struggle, the Chinese supported Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union, or ZANU, while the Soviet supported Joshua Nkomo's Zimbabwe Africa People's Union, or ZAPU.

This historic support for ZANU forms the basis of China's current efforts to bail the Zimbabwe government out of its economic mess. President Mugabe spent six days in China last week discussing a financial bailout plan. In contrast, he is currently subject to a travel ban by the United States, the European Union, Australia and other nations. Meanwhile, the International Monetary Fund is considering next month a possible expulsion of Zimbabwe. And the South African government has agreed to negotiate a bailout of the Zimbabwe economy under the condition that the Zimbabwe ruling party resumes cooperation talks with the opposition Movement for Democratic Change and make necessary democratic and governance reforms.

This Zimbabwe deal is an example of the danger of Chinese influence undoing the progress that has been made in Africa. The details of the Chinese arrangement with Zimbabwe are not completely public, but according to *BBC News*, it involves mineral and other trade concessions in exchange for the economic help. In return for selling off a piece of its economic future, Zimbabwe evidently is prepared to make a deal with China to salvage its economy today.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry has announced that its deal does not involve interference in Zimbabwe's internal affairs. According to a statement from the Ministry, China "trusts Zimbabwe's government and people have the ability to deal properly with their own matters." Such a position undercuts efforts by South Africa to bring stability to their neighbor to the north. It undercuts the United Nations report that bitterly criticized the Zimbabwe government's recent destruction of informal businesses and non-standard housing across the country that has left hundreds of thousands of Zimbabweans out of work and without shelter during that country's winter.

This is not the first time that the Chinese have abetted an African government in repressing its people. In Sudan, Human Rights Watch has

reported that the Chinese have supplied Sudan with ammunition, tanks, helicopters and fighter aircraft, as well as with anti-personnel and anti-tank mines. This lethal material has contributed to thousands of Sudanese deaths, most recently in Darfur. Meanwhile, China has developed an oil field in south Sudan and built a 900-mile pipeline to the Red Sea so oil can be more easily sent to China. Sudan now accounts for 5% of all of China's oil imports.

Chinese involvement elsewhere in Africa also is troubling:

- China has extended \$2 billion in credits to Angola without apparent regard for persistent concerns about a lack of transparency by the Angolan government. International financial institutions and donor nations have tried to address this key governance issue for more than a decade.
- The Chinese company Hennan Guoji is proposing investment of \$200 million in a Lumley Beach project in Sierra Leone with no apparent concern for environmental issues.
- China has announced its intention to boost ties with the current Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo with no mention of efforts to cooperate with the United Nations and the international community to completely end the fighting there or support free and fair elections.

China has long criticized Western efforts to promote democracy and good governance in Africa and has promoted what it calls "African cultural and economic rights" that allow governments to go their own way despite efforts of the international community and their own citizens to promote reforms. The only conditionality China imposes on its African partners is that they support the "one China" policy and refuse to acknowledge the sovereignty of Taiwan. Other than that requirement, China's African partners are free to pursue any foreign or economic policies they want even if they violate international treaties and standards.

These treaties and standards don't only involve democracy and governance. There has been much progress made in recent years to protect Africa's wildlife and other natural resources. As testimony today will reveal, China is violating international law on African ivory and timber.

The Chinese have another aim in targeting Africa for its friendship campaign. There are 38 African members of the World Trade Organization, which is the largest regional bloc in that body. If China can gain friends in Africa and influence this voting bloc, it will have the power, at the very least, to frustrate rules it opposes, such as restrictions on intellectual property rights violations.

One day soon, African leaders dealing with China may find, like the Mugabe government is likely to find, that Chinese assistance may not have the conditionality of Western aid, but it is not purely intended to help the people of Africa. China pursues a draconian “one child policy” that is anti-life. If they don’t care about the lives of their own children, why would we believe they would care about the lives of African children? China routinely violates the human rights of its citizens, as demonstrated in last week’s hearing on China’s treatment of the Falun Gong religious movement. If they don’t care about the rights of their own citizens, why would they care about the rights of average African citizens?

It is a cruel irony that the weapons sold to African governments, who use them against their own people, will have to be paid for one day, and the citizens of those countries will wind up funding the very weapons used to deny their rights. African leaders will either accumulate new debt or will make deals to sell off their resources and their future. Either way, China stands to benefit.

Without objection, I would like to enter into the record two articles on China’s role in Africa. The first is by Jeff Krilla of the International Republican Institute, which was printed in the July 27th issue of *Taiwan News*, and a July 12th article in *The Standard* of China by China researcher Joshua Eisenman.